

Harmless ‘The Three Stooges’ Can’t Deliver the Goods

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 13, 2012 - 7:44am

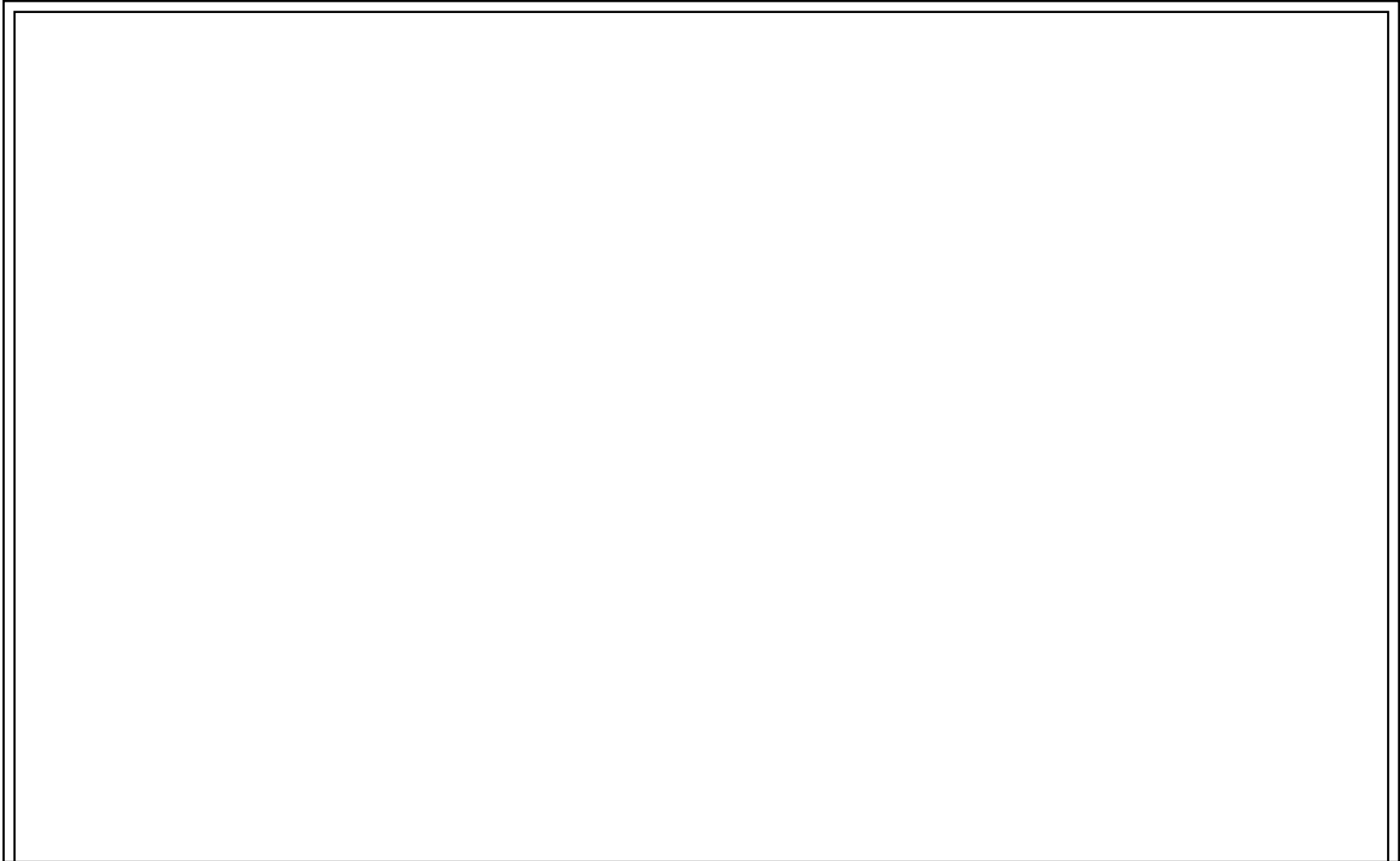
- [Chris Diamantopoulos](#) [2]
- [Curly](#) [3]
- [Farelly Brothers](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Jane Lynch](#) [6]
- [Jennifer Hudson](#) [7]
- [Larry](#) [8]
- [Larry David](#) [9]
- [Moe](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [Sean Hayes](#) [13]
- [Sofia Vergara](#) [14]
- [The Three Stooges](#) [15]
- [Twentieth Century Fox](#) [16]
- [Will Sasso](#) [17]



CHICAGO – Moe, Larry and Curly are three of the most popular names in the show business universe, and bringing them back to life in the new film “The Three Stooges” was a questionable risk. The re-imaging, with Chris Diamantopoulos, Sean Hayes and Will Sasso filling the trio’s roles, is a loving tribute that unfortunately veers in too many “Un-Stooge” like directions.

What works immediately is the care and detail given the famous comedy team by the three leads stepping into the personalities. It was obvious that they wanted to make sure that the Stooge essence was honored, and that mission was accomplished. None of the three pushed the characters, they simply played them as faithfully as their talent could deliver. The standout was Chris Diamantopoulos’s Moe, who honored the character (and subsequently, the real man) so much that it felt like a time machine has transported the bowl haircut eye poker forward to our world. Delivering the “narrative” was a different scenario. The plot didn’t fit in with the care given to the three. It was unfunny and mostly just stupid.

The “soy-cumstances” are lifted straight from Jake and Elwood Blues. Moe (Chris Diamantopoulos), Larry (Sean Hayes) and Curly (Will Sasso) are dropped off as babies to a Catholic orphanage. They are immediately loyal to each other, even as children, as Moe can’t go along with an adoption without bringing along the other two. This causes havoc in the institution, especially with Mother Superior (Jane Lynch), Sister Rosemary (Jennifer Hudson) and Sister Mary-Mengele (Larry David). They grow into adults without being adopted, taking on their familiar forms, motivations and show effects whenever hitting each other.





The Boys (Will Sasso, Chris Diamantopolous and Sean Hayes) with Sonia Vergara (Lydia) in 'The Three Stooges'
Photo credit: Peter Iovino for Twentieth Century Fox

The three are finally thrust into the real world when the Catholic diocese needs \$800,000 to keep the orphanage open. Instead of getting the band together, the moronic pals seek any kind of work. This involves a shady character named Lydia (Sofia Vergara), who hires the boys to put a hit on her husband Teddy (Kirby Heyborne). This is complicated by the fact that Teddy is a fellow orphan – it was he who was adopted instead of Moe into a rich family – and the Stooges muck up the job in a way that only they can.

Bobby and Peter Farelly, the filmmaker brother behind such hit comedies as “There’s Something About Mary,” definitely stir in the love with this valentine to their idols. It is obvious that they took great care in making sure the Stooge characters were correctly drawn and performed, which left them little time to give the trio something interesting to do. The decision to split the movie into three parts, like the old short films that the original Stooges did, was sound. But in doing so, why not just create three separate situations? Why did the film have to be warmed over Blues Brothers, where B-list stars like Jennifer Hudson get to play nuns and add nothing to the allure of the Stooges?

The eye poking, cartoon violence gags are straight out of the old shorts, which was like pop culture comfort food, save for a Farelly Brothers-like bit where urinating babies cause trouble for the three. It was amusing to see people like the “Jersey Shore” gang – Moe ends up on the show – getting the Stooge treatment from the lead abuser. And Larry David’s nun character was so irritating, whenever the Stooges did anything to punish the performance it was satisfying.

Serious congratulations have to go to the three lead actors. It’s hard to imagine taking on greater pop cultural personas and trying to deliver them. Will Sasso as Curly captures the woo-woosing comic frustration of the most popular Stooge, and gives him that sweetness that made Curly Howard so iconic. Sean Hayes of “Will and Grace” played Larry a bit sour, but his vocal characterization was right on and the Larry-ness was presence. Chris Diamantopolous (who I assume must keep the family name intact or be cursed) plays the type of Moe that honors both the strange bully character and the original real guy. Moe Howard was heart wrenchingly loyal to the act right up his death, and somehow Diamantopolous was able to capture that.



Bad Habit: Swimsuit Model Kate Upton (Sister Bernice) and Jane Lynch (Mother Superior) in ‘The Three Stooges’
Photo credit: Peter Iovino for Twentieth Century Fox

Having said all that, it’s tough to completely recommend getting babysitters to see the film. There is too much plot development with actors that are window dressing, for example Sofia Vergara of “Modern Family” runs the risk of overexposing (metaphorically) that comic Latina character she’s developed. And who knew Stephen Collins (“7th Heaven”) was still working? Once the impression that the new Stooges are working has passed, the rest of the picture is lifeless.

And therein lies the dilemma. Is the love for the old characters, with so many generations enjoying their antics through the film and television years, enough to justify the reboot? Give credit to the Farelly Brothers for having the power to bring them back, but unfortunately that wasn’t enough.

“The Three Stooges” opens everywhere on April 13th. Featuring Sean Hayes, Will Sasso, Chris Diamantopoulous, Jane Lynch, Sofia Vergara, Jennifer Hudson, Kate Upton, Larry David and Nicole ‘Snooki’ Polizzi. Screenplay by Bobby Farelly, Peter Farelly and Mike Cerrone. Directed by Bobby and Peter Farelly. Rated “PG”



[18]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [19]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

© 2012 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 20 2024 - 10:29am):
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/18156/harmless-the-three-stooges-can-t-deliver-the-goods>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/chris-diamantopoulous>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/curly>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/farelly-brothers>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jane-lynch>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/jennifer-hudson>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/larry>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/larry-david>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/moe>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/sean-hayes>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/sofia-vergara>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/the-three-stooges>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/twentieth-century-fox>

[17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/will-sasso>
[18] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
[19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>